

A Law Student Says "No" to Freezing Her Eggs

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INTRODUCTION

Tick-tock goes our biological clocks. A law professor who I admire greatly, only half-jokingly said to my class that the new gift for women graduating from law school would be our parents paying for us to freeze our eggs.

The look on my fellow female classmates' faces was a mixture of relief and panic. That moment was simply an illustration of what we were already thinking and talking about. These are the conversations that highly educated and accomplished women are having today. It is not an exaggeration to state that the majority of time when we discuss our future legal careers we are simultaneously wondering whether we will find someone to marry and when and/or if we are going to have children.

ANALYSIS

For those who are married the conversation focuses on putting off childbirth, fearing that it would interfere with their careers. My classmates who are dating question whether their significant other will propose

and how much time they can justifiably allocate to waiting. Lastly, for those that are single, anxiety increases as both statistics and anecdotes affirm that highly educated women are less likely to get married. This anxiety is further exasperated by our "standards." We seek partners who are equally educated and partners that will also share our views on families, or more specifically when to have children.

Bring egg freezing to the table and the women in law school breathe a sigh of relief. It gives us more time, it takes the pressure off, and we don't have to worry about that pesky career/childrearing balance. However, egg freezing frees us from our concerns only because we often do not and are not meant to understand the dangers of the procedure.

Firstly, the fertility industry has downplayed the risks associated with egg retrieval, the drugs that are used to hyperstimulate our ovaries, and the transvaginal aspiration needed to retrieve our eggs.¹²³ Secondly, the statistical chance of freezing eggs, fertilizing them in the future, and then having a successful implantation remain relatively low.⁴ Fertility companies are profiting off of the anxiety of educated women.

CONCLUSION

Aside from the potential medical issues, it's concerning that society is constantly inundating us with different values we are encouraged to ascribe to. The "women can have it all," "women can't have it all," "lean in," "lean out," mantras we throw around in our regular conversations oppress the ability of women to make choices for **themselves**. There will always be women who choose to stay home, mothers who work, and those who choose not to have children. However, when companies such as Apple, Facebook, and Citigroup provide "benefits" to women to freeze their eggs they send a clear message that educated and successful women should put off childbirth. Messages like this prevent women from thinking for themselves about what they personally want and further feed into the personal and societal angst we have regarding our biological clocks.

¹ "Risks of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)," Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology, last modified 2014, http://www.sart.org/FACTSHEET_Risks_of_In_Vitro_Fertilization/.

² "About Egg Retrieval," Center for Genetics and Society, <http://www.geneticsandsociety.org/section.php?id=28>.

³ "Sindy's Testimony," Eggsploration, <http://www.eggsploration.com/testimony-swm.htm>.

⁴ Pamela Mahoney Tsigdinos, "The Sobering Facts About Egg Freezing That Nobody's Talking About," *Wired*, October 24, 2014, <http://www.wired.com/2014/10/egg-freezing-risks/>.